

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY VETOES HOUSE BILL 2167
Allowing Wider Boats To Be Towed Would Endanger North Carolina Motorists

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today vetoed House Bill 2167, “An act to increase the width of boats that may be transported on highway routes during the day and night without a permit and to provide for an annual permit as opposed to a single trip permit for oversize boats.”

Here is the text of the governor’s veto message:

House Bill 2167, allows extremely large boats as wide as 9-1/2 feet to be towed on any state road at anytime, including night time, any day of the week, without a permit as required by all other states from Texas to Virginia. This bill would also allow a blood alcohol level of .08, double that allowed by commercial vehicles of smaller size.

I sincerely believe that this bill puts families at a risk on the highways and would result in death or serious injury. North Carolina has 60,000 miles of narrow two lane roads that cannot accommodate the 9-1/2 foot width and maintains roughly 1,000 bridges 18-feet wide or less, which would require a 9-1/2 foot boat to cross the center line in violation of N.C.G.S. 20-146, and into oncoming traffic. Further, if two 9-1/2 foot boats were to meet on an 18-foot strip of road or bridge it would be physically impossible to escape a collision.

I am deeply concerned about 9-1/2 foot boats meeting a school bus. The buses travel primarily on rural roads and often in the dark during early morning and early evening hours.

I encourage the General Assembly to let boat haulers use the current law of permitting for the rest of this season and then have the legislature take up this issue in January when there is time to thoughtfully avoid the consequences of this bill.

Therefore, I veto the bill.

The veto is Easley’s ninth. Bills vetoed previously include: November 2002, Senate Bill 1283 related to unqualified appointments to various boards and commissions; June 2003, Senate Bill 931 which stripped the State Board of Education of its authority to set teacher standards; August 2003, House Bill 917 which raised fees charged by finance companies; July 2004, House Bill 429 which would have required local governments to make cash payments to billboard owners of up to five times the annual revenue generated by the billboard upon its removal; March 2005, Senate Bill 130 which would have